

**REMARKS**

Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 2, 4-11, 13-15, and 17 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 4, 10, and 14 are the independent claims.

Initially, Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that claim 7 would be allowable if amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, discussed below and rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claim. Also, claims 3, 4, 12, and 16 were indicated as reciting patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. By the present Amendment, Applicant has cancelled claims 3, 12 and 16, amended independent claims 1, 10, and 14 to respectively include the features of claims 3, 12, and 16, rewritten claim 4 in independent form to include the features of independent claim 1, and respectfully maintained claim 7 in dependent form because it is respectfully submitted that claim 4, from which it depends, is allowable. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 2, 4-11, 13-15, and 17 are in allowable form.

Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In response to this rejection, Applicant has amended claims 6 and 7 in view of the Examiner's comments. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 6 and 7 now even more fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,780,740 (Fukae) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,992,843 (Lee). Claims 9, 13, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Fukae in view of Lee and further in view of Japanese Patent No. 06199441 (Noguchi).

It is respectfully submitted that all rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the reasons set forth above.

Lastly, it is noted that the Office Action takes the position that various recitations of

claims 1 and 4 are limiting. Applicant respectfully directs attention to the preambles of claims 1 and 4, which include the transition "comprising," which transition has repeatedly been interpreted as not limiting a claim to the recited elements.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 2-22-05

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